How the World Regards the Church and How the Church Regards the World

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Preacher: Edward Lobb

[0:00] So we turn now to our Bible readings, and we're going to read this evening from John's Gospel.! Edward Lobb will be preaching for us later in the service from this section, which we've been going through in recent weeks. And this evening, we're going to read from chapter 15, picking up in verse 18, through to verse 4 of chapter 16. If you don't have a Bible, there are some around the sides, so please do grab one just now, and it will help you as we read just now and as Edward preaches to us later.

And if you have one of those Bibles, it's page 902 in those Bibles. So John chapter 15, beginning at verse 18. If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were off the world, the world would love you as its own. But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, a servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my father also.
If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my father. But the word that is written in their law must be fulfilled. They hated me without a cause. But when the helper comes, whom I will send to you from the father, the spirit of truth who proceeds from the father, he will bear witness about me, and you also will bear witness because you have been with me from the beginning.
I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God, and they will do these things because they have not known the father nor me. But I have said these things to you that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told them to you. I did not say these things to you from the beginning because I was with you. Amen. This is God's word.
Well, friends, let's turn to John's gospel, chapter 15. And our passage begins at verse 18. And my title for this evening is How the World Regards the Church and How the Church Regards the World.
[3:11] Well, let's begin with a bit of a jolt to our senses here. Have a look at verse 17, where I think we ended up last Sunday evening. These things I command you so that you will love one another. So here Jesus is commanding his apostles to love each other. And yet in verse 18, without any kind of warning, we find ourselves grappling with hatred. If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. So we're bound to ask what is going on in Jesus's mind that makes him jump so suddenly from thinking about love to thinking about hatred? Well, we'll come to that question in just a moment. But first, let's remind ourselves of the setting of these chapters here. This whole section of John's gospel, five chapters, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17, record the Last Supper, followed by a long piece of instruction given by Jesus to his 11 apostles, which is known as the upper room discourse.

Judas Iscariot, in chapter 13, has left the table, and he's disappeared into the darkness to finalize his arrangements to betray Jesus. So the traitor is now absent, and Jesus then turns to his 11 men to teach them about their future. And throughout these chapters, he's making the point that he's very soon going to be leaving them, and they don't like to hear that. How could they carry on without him? Well, he says to them, you will be able to carry on without me because my heavenly father is very soon going to send you another helper, the Holy Spirit. And when he arrives, he will transform the situation. In fact, it will be better for you to have him than to have me. The work of the kingdom

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will go forward much more powerfully and extensively when he has arrived. So don't be dismayed. In the words of chapter 14, verse 27, let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. So the whole tone of this long piece of instruction is very encouraging, but it's also bracing, challenging, because Jesus is forewarning his 11 men that their future is going to be tough. Perhaps you'd look with me to chapter 16, verse 33 for a moment, the very last verse before we get Jesus's prayer. 1633, because in a sense it summarizes the tone of this whole piece of instruction. 1633, I've said these things to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart, I've overcome the world. So what he's saying is peace in the midst of tribulation. That is the reality of Christian life and service. In me, he says, you will have peace because you belong to me and you abide in me as the branches of the vine abide in the vine. You will experience real peace, but your outward circumstances will undoubtedly bring you tribulation. And it's the world that will cause you pain and suffering. In the world, he says, you will have tribulation.

You can't avoid it, but take heart, I have overcome the world. And because you are my people, you share in my victory. The world will cause you a lot of pain, but in the end, it will not defeat you. [6:53] Really, that final verse of chapter 16 sums up the whole thrust of this upper room discourse. Jesus is saying to his apostles, and he says it to us as well, that following him, serving him, will be very difficult at times, but his peace in the end will prevail over the tribulation caused by the world. The world in the end will not master Jesus and his people. Quite the opposite. He has overcome the world. Now, this brings us back to chapter 15 and verse 18. If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. So what does Jesus mean by the world?

In verse 18, he's saying that the world is going to hate the apostles just as it has hated him. So what is this hate-filled world? In John's gospel, the word world means human society living without reference to God. In fact, more than that, living in hostility towards God, resenting the idea that human beings might be accountable to him. And here is this jolt that I mentioned a moment ago. Verse 17, love one another, but, verse 18, prepare to be hated. And if we ask how and why Jesus should move so rapidly from love to hatred, the answer must be that the Lord's people, the church, need to be strongly bound together in love for each other so that we can survive the hatred of those who hate Jesus.

If we're isolated from each other, we're much more vulnerable. On the African plains, it is the isolated prey animal that gets run down by the lions. Safety lies in the close support of others. Well, we must grapple with this painful truth here in verse 18 under our first heading, which is how the world regards the church. In this verse 18, Jesus is making it clear that the world, unbelieving human society, is going to hate the church. Now, that is a painful thought, isn't it?

[9:10] We look at ourselves and we think, what is so hateful about us? Why should the world hate us? Are we hating the world? No, we're not. Do we launch suicide bombers at society? We certainly don't.

We deplore that kind of behavior. In fact, the Christian church has been largely responsible for providing all that is best in the world. It's the church that has pioneered so much in education, founding schools and universities, in medicine and science, in bettering the conditions of poor people, in furthering social justice, in stimulating democracy itself. You'd think that the world might be grateful for the Christian church. But instead, Jesus says that the Lord's people will be hated by the world. So why should this be? Well, there's a variety of reasons which come out of the text here. Look back first to chapter 14 and verse 30, 1430, where Jesus says, the ruler of this world is coming. Now, that's Jesus's description of the devil. And it helps us to understand why the Lord's people are hated by the world. The world is ruled by the devil.

John puts it like this in his first letter, chapter 5, verse 19, The whole world lies in the power of the evil one. The apostle Paul describes the devil as the God of this world, God with a small g.

So if Satan is the ruler and the God of this world, it means that the people of this world follow him. They're in his grip. They do as he wishes. So if we are to say to them, if we were to say to them, you realize, don't you, that you're serving the devil, most of them would say, absolute nonsense. We don't even believe in a devil.

But that's part of his strategy, to conceal himself, to conceal his identity, and to deceive people into thinking that they are their own masters. But Jesus and Paul and John are quite clear.

[11:16] The devil is the mastermind that governs unbelieving human society. So when people of the world who follow the God of this world come up against other people whose allegiance is to

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Jesus, they feel very uncomfortable.

They regard Jesus as a kind of interloper, somebody who does not belong to the world at all, somebody who has not capitulated to the rule of Satan. And they realize, moreover, that Jesus is commanding them to switch their allegiance from Satan to him.
And they prefer to walk the broad and easy road than to set out on a narrow and difficult road. They don't realize that the broad and easy road leads to destruction, whereas the narrow and difficult road leads to life.
So what they're doing is indulging in short-term thinking. They forget the ultimate destination and simply look at the path immediately before them. And they say, this path is good.
It's broad. It's easy. Much less hard work than the life of those Christians who are pledged to obedience to their master. Obedience. There's no obedience here on this broad road.
[12:29] So our motto is, eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. Three cheers, good health, pour me another one, Charlie, and let's make whoopee. So the world looks at the church and doesn't like it.

William Temple put it like this, the world would not hate angels for being angelic, but it does hate men and women for being Christians.
It grudges them their new character. It is tormented by their peace. It is infuriated by their joy. So that's the first reason why the world hates the church.
The world belongs to the devil and the church belongs to the Lord Jesus. And there is an unending hostility in Satan towards Jesus. Now a second reason for the world hating the church is quite simply that it hates Jesus himself.
There it is in verse 18. If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. But why should the world hate Jesus?
[13:36] Is there not something astonishing about human society hating him? He was the best person ever to walk this earth. So warm, so compassionate, so full of love for the people that he met.

And how much sin and corruption did he have in his character? Not a squeak, nothing. No jealousy, no craftiness, no deceptiveness, no pride, no haughtiness, no impure lust, no covetousness.
When he spoke, people flocked around him in huge numbers to hear him because what he said was so penetrating, so authoritative, so illuminating. People had never heard anything like it.
As they said in John chapter 7 verse 46, no one ever spoke like this man. And yet he was hated.
Hated so intensely that after only three years of life in the public eye, he was executed.
So why the hatred? Well, he tells us clearly in John chapter 7 verse 7. Now at that stage in the gospel story, he's talking to his own brothers, the younger sons of his mother Mary, his half-brothers.
[14:47] And at that stage, they were clearly not yet followers of his. And he says to them, the world cannot hate you, but it hates me because, now here's the reason, it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.

Now of course that was an essential element in his preaching, to expose the reality of evil and sin in society. And he did that to make people realize the truth about themselves, that they were sinners who needed to turn to him for forgiveness.
He was constantly calling people to repentance. And many people hated him for it. He was the light of the world who had come to expose the darkness of the world.
The world hates me because I testify that its works are evil. And it's not difficult to see how this hatred of Jesus becomes transferred to his people as well.
It's because his people grow more like him. In the metaphor of the vine and the branches from the earlier part of chapter 15, if we people are true branches of his, it means that his life and vitality are flowing into our own systems and we cannot remain as we were before.
[16:04] We're changed. We grow close to him in love. The fruit of real change in our characters and our behavior begins to show. And the way we view the unbelieving world becomes like his way of viewing it.

So we see the shallowness of human life without God, but we also see the wickedness of the world. And like Jesus, we have to testify that the world's works are evil.
Now, a good example of this is the way that some of our own folk in small groups go out into the streets on Saturday mornings seeking to engage passers-by and talking about abortion.

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Now, some passers-by are thoughtful and they're willing to stop and talk reasonably, but others use fierce language and express real hatred towards the Christians who are upholding the sanctity of unborn human life.
So what Christians are doing is testifying to the world that its works are evil. That's what Jesus was hated for and that's what we will be hated for as well.
[17:07] Then verse 19 sharpens the issue up further. Jesus says, if you were of the world, the world would love you as its own.

But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. So it's because Jesus chose Christian people out of the world that the world hates us.
Once upon a time, we were entirely of the world. Everybody starts there. That was our habitat. It was our atmosphere. It was our home. We breathed its air.
We said, this is the place for us to be. The world was to us as the river is to the hippopotamus. The place where we had our niche, our identity. But, verse 19, the Lord Jesus chose us out of the world, removed us decisively from it.
As Paul puts it in Colossians chapter 1, God has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son. And that is a decisive transfer.
[18:16] It's a fundamental change of identity. And in John 15, 19, Jesus says, this is why the world hates you. I have taken you out of it by my choice.

You no longer belong there. And this is why Christian people often feel that we're aliens in the world. Because we belong to a new society with a different set of values.
Let me put it like this. We are former rebels against our true king. But our true king, by his choice of us, has won our allegiance back to himself.
So it's hardly surprising if we prove to be unpopular with the people who were once our brothers in arms, our co-rebels. We've deserted them.
We now have a new allegiance. We belong to a new master. So they take a dim view of what they regard as our desertion. Now let's be clear about something else here.
[19:17] Christian people are not by nature better people than the men and women of the world. As Paul puts it in Ephesians chapter 2, we are all of us by nature children of wrath.

We are by nature sinners. We're not morally superior to people of the world. But because we have been chosen by our Lord Jesus, drawn by his love into a radically different community, we will often be regarded as pariahs in a world that is still in rebellion against the Lord.
So, we need to be not surprised when we find ourselves deeply disliked by men and women who operate under a different regime from ours.
And this is really why Jesus is giving this teaching to his apostles. He's saying to them, be prepared. Don't be surprised. Look at the first verse of chapter 16.
John 16. I've said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. And that's the danger the apostles were in. It's the danger that all Christians are in.
[20:26] It's the danger of falling away from Christ, which means deserting him. And if a Christian is unprepared for the hostility of the world, that Christian may give in to the world's pressures.

For example, think of a young adult, male or female, who has recently become a Christian. The family of that young adult may be very hostile to the Christian faith.
Perhaps this young person's father is a strong-minded man, even something of a bully. And he treats his child's newfound faith with contempt. Stop all this nonsense, he says.
Come to your senses. Christianity is a relic of the Middle Ages. You've been brainwashed by superstitious, gullible people. It's time for you to grow up. But dad, don't you butt dad me.
I've been around the block a great deal more than you have. I know what I'm talking about. It takes courage to resist that kind of opposition. But Jesus is giving us this teaching so that we will be forewarned and forearmed.
[21:33] Now let's work our way on through the passage. Verse 20. Remember the word that I said to you, said to you, a servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. So what he's saying here is the pattern of your life will be a reproduction of the pattern of my life.
If men of the world persecuted me, which indeed they have done, you can be sure that you will fare no better. it's not all bad, however. If they kept my word, which some of them have done, they will

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keep yours also.
In other words, some of them will leave the world's domain through your teaching and that will be a great encouragement to you. But, verse 21, all these things, these hateful things, they will do to you on account of my name.
In other words, because of me and the fact that you are now aligned with me. So they won't persecute you because of who you are, but because of who I am.
[22:43] It's on account of me. And then Jesus digs even further into the underlying cause of the world's hostility at the end of verse 21. These things they will do to you on account of my name because they do not know him who sent me.

They do not know God the Father. What he means is if they had truly known the God whose character and plans are revealed in the Old Testament, they would immediately have recognized me when they first encountered me.
But so little did they understand their Old Testaments that they could make no link between me and the God of Israel. They didn't know the God of Israel.
So when his son appeared displaying all the characteristics of the God of Israel, they hated him and despised him and began to form plans to kill him. And these opponents of Jesus were Jewish people who prided themselves on their knowledge of the Old Testament.
It's a very sad thing, but it's one of the big themes of John's Gospel that Jesus came to his own people and his own people did not recognize him. They should have welcomed him, but instead they were bent on destroying him.
[23:57] Jesus then rubs the point home in verses 22, 3, and 4. In verse 22, he's saying that his opponents have heard his words and have rejected them and for that reason are guilty of sin.

And in verse 24, he's saying that his opponents have seen his works of power and have rejected them and for that reason are guilty of sin. So why are they guilty of sin for rejecting his words and his works?
It's because his words are ultimately the Father's words and his works of power are demonstrations of the power of God the Father. So in expressing their hatred of him and their rejection of him, they're showing that they hate the Father also, which is what he says in verse 23 and at the end of verse 24.
They refuse to recognize the connection between the Father and the Son. But the point is clear. Verse 23, whoever hates me hates my Father, God the Father also.
So this rumbles a certain type of unbeliever today. This type of unbeliever says, well, I can't accept Jesus. There are too many problems about that.
[25:17] But I love God. No. Jesus' point is that to reject him is to reject God. To hate him is to hate God. There's no way to God except by loving and trusting Jesus.

You can't put a hair's breadth between the Father and the Son. Now, I said a moment ago that Jesus is saying these things to the apostles so that they won't be surprised when opposition comes. And it's more than just opposition. It's hatred. That is a very strong word. Nobody enjoys being hated. But Jesus is saying that his followers will be hated if they stick to him.
So what are we to make of this in our own day and generation? I think there are three possible ways in which we can react to this teaching. First, we could simply turn around and walk right away from Jesus and say, I do not want to be hated.
I value my comfort too much. I don't want to stick out like a sore thumb in society. And I don't want to feel like an alien. I'm going out through that church door and I'm not coming back.
[26:35] The second is to say, I quite like the idea of being known as a Christian. I mean, after all, Jesus is a very attractive person and there are elements in his teaching which appeal to me greatly.

For example, the things that he says about his peace, his love, and his joy. I like those things, but I don't like John 15, 18 and the verses that follow it.
I do not want to be hated. So I think what I'll do is join a church that does not attract the hatred of the world, a church that sits comfortably with the spirit of the age, a church that the world approves of because it buys into the world's agenda.
Now, friends, you know as well as I do that there are plenty of churches that buy into the world's agenda. There are whole denominations, alas, which have largely capitulated to the world's agenda because they don't want to have the world's mud thrown at them.

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So if you go into a church building, it might be a cathedral, and you see prominent displays of information about saving the planet from the effects of climate change, if that's the big thing, you know that that church has lost sight of the gospel.
[27:50] Or the display might be rainbow flags and notices about inclusivity. Well, again, you know what is really being valued there. I read the other day of a cathedral in the south of England which has a pair of peregrine falcons nesting on its roof.

They have a website, a webcam, not website, a webcam set up, and so people are constantly monitoring the nest of these falcons. The nest apparently was vandalized a couple of months ago, but the birds persevered, laid a second clutch of eggs, and now have three chicks.
Now, I personally have been very interested in British birds for a long time, so I say three cheers for the peregrine falcons. Well done, you persevering birds. But when a cathedral puts a lot of time and effort and no doubt money and personnel into conserving wildlife, you can only wonder at what kind of message is proclaimed in its pulpit.
The world will never hate a church that invests in the conservation of wildlife, but it will hate a church that preaches repentance and salvation. Now, friends, don't misunderstand me.
I love our planet Earth. I thank God for its beauty and its amazing productivity. Of course, we have a responsibility given by God to look after it as best we can. But planet preservation is not the gospel.
[29:15] So that's the second way of responding to John 15, 18. Join a church that professes to follow Jesus but actually eliminates from its teaching anything that might attract the hatred of the world.

The worldly church is not hated by the world because it is part of the world. The third way of responding to John 15, 18 is to say, I'm going to take Jesus' teaching seriously even if it costs me dear.
I shall stick with him through thick and thin for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us unite.
Finally. It is a marriage, isn't it? one of the Bible's most lovely descriptions of the Christian faith is that Christ is the bridegroom and his people are his bride and his bride is called to be faithful to him. That's what it means to be a branch of the vine. It's the one who abides in him who finds that he abides in us and that's the disciple who proves to be fruitful, whose life displays the transforming characteristics of Christ himself.
[30:25] So what is this going to look like in our actual experience of life? Well, I've already mentioned that we shall often feel like aliens because our lives are set within a framework which is so different from the world's framework.

But although we will sometimes receive hatred from the world as verse 18 makes clear and persecution from the world as verse 20 makes clear, there is a kind of bubbling joy for us that runs beneath it all.
Just listen to these words from Luke chapter 6 where Jesus is speaking to a large crowd of disciples and he's opening up to them the meaning of discipleship. He says, blessed are you when people hate you.
Isn't that striking? Not wretched are you when people hate you but blessed are you when people hate you. And he goes on, and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil on account of the Son of Man.
Now that's the key element. It's on his account that the true disciple is hated. This is what he's just been saying in John 15, 21. All these things they will do to you on account of my name.
[31:39] So the hated Christian is hated not because he or she is particularly hateful but because Jesus is hateful. It's on account of him that the world will revile us and exclude us.

But here's how Jesus goes on in that passage in Luke 6. Rejoice, he says. Rejoice in that day. That's the day when you're reviled.
Rejoice in that day and leap for joy for behold your reward is great in heaven for so their fathers did to the prophets. I wouldn't recommend leaping for joy if you're over 60.
You'll probably end up in accident and emergency but we can all leap for joy in our hearts when the world reviles us. Jesus goes on a few verses later in the same chapter woe to you when all people speak well of you for so their fathers did to the false prophets.
So the situation is that the true disciple gets reviled and the false prophet gets praised and applauded. Does it seem unfair?

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[32:49] Well it may but the encouragement to stay true to Christ is that the true disciple has a great reward in heaven. Let me if I may speak to the younger people here for a moment children teenagers younger adults let me ask this question where will you be in middle age when you're perhaps 45 or 50?

You will have chosen one of the three ways of responding which I've outlined. So you might walk away from the Lord Jesus altogether in which case you will end up as a purely secular man or woman.
Or you might seek to join a body of people who call themselves a Christian church but don't believe or teach the Bible gospel a group of people who cannot bear to use the chief categories of Christian truth salvation judgment sin repentance godliness self-discipline heaven and hell.
No they say you can't use words like that because they divide people into different groups and we want to include everybody regardless of what they value or how they live. now if you join a church like that you will get excited about the peregrine falcons but you'll forget that Jesus came to seek and to save the lost.
The word lost will not be in your vocabulary because you will have ceased to believe in salvation and judgment the two great pillars on which the whole of the biblical revelation is founded.
[34:26] or you'll take the third route and you'll stick with Jesus you'll abide in him and he will abide in you you will get wounded you'll be scarred but the scars will be honorable scars and the wounds you receive will be on account of Jesus you will be hated by the world but you will learn to count that hatred and honor and a joy you'll learn to leap for joy when your name is spurned as evil but you will not turn your back on the world that is spurning you that's the temptation if the world hates you and hurts you your temptation will be to withdraw from it now historically Christians have often done this over the centuries there have been groups of Christians who've said this world it's so hostile to us why should we continue to feel these wounds and this fierce hostility let's retreat and we'll build a safe haven within the world a haven that has as little exposure as possible to the fierce words of the world so this group of Christians clubs together buys land puts up buildings a school for the children a meeting house for worship comfortable houses and cottages for families to live in farm buildings so they can keep livestock and produce their own food they aim to be a self-sufficient community so that they can turn their back on the world it's happened quite often but Jesus takes a very different view look at the way our passage develops in verses 18 to 25 he's telling the apostles to expect the hostility of the world the section ends in verse 25 by Jesus quoting from

Psalm 69 the word that is written in their law must be fulfilled they hated me without a cause now look at the next word but and you see how the Lord's train of thought is developing you'll be hated you'll be persecuted but when the helper the Holy Spirit comes he will face the world he will address the world by bearing witness about me and you also verse 27 you will bear witness you will not run away to your little haven your little ghetto you too will bear witness because he says you've been with me from the beginning the beginning of my public ministry you apostles are the ones who have seen me and heard me more than anybody you are eyewitnesses to the truth so you know what to say about me as you address the world you know me so here's our second heading much briefer than the first how the church regards the world
Jesus' teaching is that we face the world we go to the world we evangelize the world how does God himself regard the world does he hate the world because it hates the Lord Jesus not at all John 3 16 God so loved the world that he gave up his only son as a sacrifice to bring forgiveness to all those who are willing to receive it God loves the world because it is lost and helpless its people are like sheep without a shepherd if he hated the world he would have turned his back on it long ago and look back to verse 19 in our chapter Jesus says to the apostles and to us you are not of the world but I chose you out of the world you see all of us who are Christians were once entirely of the world we organized our lives as if God did not exist we ignored him he meant no more to us than a stone or a block of wood and as he chose us out of the world so he continues to choose men and women and boys and girls out of the world transferring us from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of his beloved son so let's turn to the final two verses of chapter 15 and see how he sets about bringing the good news to the world verse 26 but when the helper comes whom I will send to you from the father the spirit of truth who proceeds from the father he will bear witness about me and you also will bear witness because you have been with me from the beginning
God's agent is the Holy Spirit he is the third person of the Trinity his nature is divine exactly the same nature as that of the father and the son and verse 26 makes the point that he has been sent

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to the world by Jesus from the father you see how Jesus says I will send him to you from the father the ancient creeds of the church say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the father and the son so all three persons of the Trinity are involved in the evangelization of the world so let's notice three things first the Holy Spirit bears witness that's what Jesus says at the end of verse 26 and this idea of bearing witness is one of the great themes of John's gospel in fact we meet it right back at the very beginning chapter 1 verse 5 which is about John the Baptist there was a man sent from God whose name was John he came as a witness to bear witness about the light and as you read through John's gospel this theme of bearing witness or testifying comes again and again so it's as though
John the evangelist not John the Baptist but John the evangelist who wrote the gospel it's as though he sets his whole account of Jesus as in a court of law and the whole world is sitting up in the public gallery watching the proceedings one witness after another is called to the witness stand to speak about Jesus and the watching world then has to make up its mind is Jesus the Christ or is he an imposter world what is your verdict would you believe in him or would you reject him that's the way John the evangelist sets out his account of Jesus and in chapter 15 verse 26 Jesus teaches us that the great witness bearer is the Holy Spirit himself look at that final phrase of verse 26 he will bear witness about me and because he is the spirit of truth what he says about Jesus is the truth namely that Jesus is not some loose canon or imposter he is indeed the Christ and God's only begotten son so the spirit's role here is to bear witness second
[41:39] I've half said this already but it just needs to be emphasized the Holy Spirit bears witness about Jesus that's his task about Jesus no doubt he's interested in physics and chemistry and biology after all he was deeply involved in the creation of the universe he must know about these things but his main concern is to tell the truth about Jesus why?

because Jesus is the beginning the middle and the end of the gospel the gospel is all about him the father has entrusted to Jesus the power to save and the authority to judge eternal life is found in Jesus and nowhere else the Holy Spirit's great concern is to bear witness to the world about Jesus and third verse 27 the Lord's people also are to bear witness about Jesus and you also will bear witness he says so one of our great responsibilities is to tell the world the truth about Jesus the Spirit is the primary witness bearer but he uses the Lord's people as the channel of his own truthful witness so we too are to be unashamed to bear witness about Jesus he is our gospel the good news is all about him so as we announce him to the world we tell people why they need him they need him because because we're all sinners and our sin incurs the judgment of God but
God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life so we are all witnesses as soon as we become Christians we bear witness well in this church we bear it at our life course our young people's groups our Sunday school classes on the streets in the homes of friends wherever we are we talk about Jesus again and again he is inexhaustibly interesting so the church doesn't flee from the world doesn't resent the world doesn't remain silent in the face of the world's hatred no we go to the world with the message of the gospel because the Lord Jesus who chose us out of the world continues to choose others to be inheritors of eternal life so to sum it up just very briefly the purpose of Jesus is teaching about the hatred of the world is to arm his people so that when hatred and scorn is launched at us we're not surprised in fact we are to expect it but it will at times be very painful this is why verse 17 in this passage is so important that we love one another in the church because when we love each other we'll be able to sustain brothers and sisters who are on the receiving end of hatred and opposition so friends let's buckle on our armor every day we'll need it we will only survive as real disciples of
Jesus if we abide in him and if we develop a settled determination to stick with him at whatever cost well let's bow our heads and we'll pray our dear heavenly father we praise you for your love for the world and we ask you to fill our hearts also with love for those who are like sheep without a shepherd help us graciously to bear witness to the world as the holy spirit gives us strength and opportunity and help us we pray to abide in the lord jesus and to prove fruitful in his service and we ask it for his name's sake amen amen

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